

Docket No. ATOTP0100USSerial No. 09/981,587**REMARKS**

Claims 1-25 are pending in the present application. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the pending claims based on the following remarks.

Telephone Interview Summary

Applicant's undersigned attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for the courteous and helpful telephone interview on Wednesday, 18 December 2002. In the interview, the Examiner and Applicant's attorney discussed the presently pending claims and the Izaki et al. reference. Applicant's attorney argued that these claims distinguish over the Izaki et al. reference. Applicant's attorney pointed out that the independent claims, both as originally drafted and as presently pending, recite that the step of "contacting the sensitized surface with an aqueous solution or mixture containing a silver salt having a pH in the range from about 5 to about 10 to form a catalyzed surface" forms the catalyzed surface, and that the step of "electroless plating the catalyzed surface by applying an electroless plating solution to the catalyzed surface" applies the electroless plating solution to the catalyzed surface formed by the contacting step. Applicant's attorney argued that this claim language distinguishes the present invention over Izaki et al. The Examiner agreed to reconsider the claims and the rejections thereof as a result of the points made by Applicant's attorney in these arguments, upon submission of the present paper.

The foregoing constitutes Applicant's Interview Summary in accordance with 37 CFR 1.133 and MPEP 713.04.

Rejections Based on Izaki et al.

As previously pointed out, Izaki et al. specifically require dipping the substrate in a first activator containing silver ions, dipping the substrate in a second activator containing palladium ions, and then electroless-plating the substrate thus activated by dipping the substrate in an electroless plating solution, and that the activated substrate to which the electroless plating is applied contain both silver nuclei and palladium nuclei.

Docket No. ATOTPO100USSerial No. 09/981,587

Applicant's claims 1 and 21 both recite that the step of electroless plating is applied to the catalyzed surface formed by the step of contacting the sensitized surface with an aqueous solution or mixture containing a silver salt. There is no step of applying palladium. In particular, there is no step of applying palladium to the catalyzed surface formed by the step of contacting in the present claims. While there may be, within the scope of the claims, steps such as washing, rinsing, drying, etc., intervening between the contacting step and the electroless plating step, there is no step of applying an additional catalyst such as the palladium required by Izaki et al., under the plain language of claims 1 and 21. Applicant's claims 1 and 21 specify that the catalyzed surface is substantially free of palladium, which simply emphasizes the point that there is no step of applying palladium between the contacting step and the electroless plating step.

Applicant respectfully submits that for these reasons claims 1 and 21 distinguish over the method of Izaki et al., and requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejections of Applicant's claims over this reference.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the presently pending claims patentably distinguish over Izaki et al. Since all the prior art rejections of Applicant's claims are based upon Izaki et al. and since Applicant's claims distinguish over Izaki et al., Applicant respectfully submits that the presently pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejections based on Izaki et al., including both the rejections under Section 102 and the rejections under Section 103.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims of the above-identified application patentably distinguish over the prior art, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests notice to such effect.

In the event issues remain in the prosecution of this application, Applicant requests that the Examiner telephone the undersigned attorney to expedite allowance of the

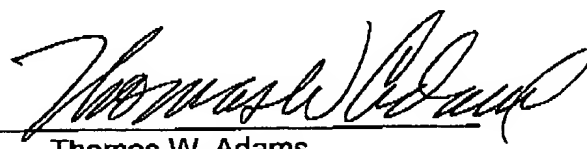
Docket No. ATOTP0100USSerial No. 09/981,587

application. Should a Petition for Extension of Time be necessary for the present Reply to the outstanding Office action to be timely filed (or if such a petition has been made and an additional extension is necessary) petition therefor is hereby made and, if any additional fees are required for the filing of this paper, the Commissioner is authorized to charge those fees to Deposit Account #18-0988, Docket No. ATOTP0100US.

Respectfully submitted,

RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, L.L.P.

Date: December 18, 2002

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